

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 /073 W
-----003574 150220Z /64

R 131720Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6307
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, NU
SUBJECT: GON INITIATIVES TOWARDS DIALOGUE

REF: MANAGUA 1638

SUMMARY: THE GON'S APPOINTMENT OF A COMMISSION TO REVIEW THE CHAMORRO ASSASSINATION INVESTIGATION (REFTEL) APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SHOT DOWN BY THE OPPOSITION. THERE ARE ONGOING INFORMAL CONTACTS BETWEEN THE GON AND THE OPPOSITION TO TREAT VARIOUS INITIATIVES SUCH AS ELECTORAL REFOR. END SUMMARY.

1. THE NAMING OF A COMMISSION OF RESPECTED CITIZENS TO REVIEW THE INVESTIGATION OF THE ASSASSINATION OF PEDRO JOAQUIN CHAMORRO HAS APPARENTLY BEEN SHOT DOWN BY THE REFUSAL OF MOST OF THE PERSONS NAMED TO ACCEPT SERVICE ON THE COMMISSION AND A JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF MOST OPPOSITION PARTIES LABELING THE GON'S INITIATIVE A FARCE.

2. APPARENTLY, ONLY DR. PALMA, A LIBERAL PARTY JUDGE, ACCEPTED
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SERVICE ON THE COMMISSION HEADED BY MINGOV MORA. THE REASONS GIVEN BY THE OTHERS FOR REFUSING SERVICE VARIED. ARCHBISHOP OBANDO DEMURRED SAYING HE DID NOT HAVE THE NECESSARY LEGAL BACKGROUND TO ACCEPT SUCH A ROLE. THE OTHER PERSONS OBJECTED TO THE FACT THE COMMISSION WOULD HAVE ONLY A HORTATORY ROLE.

3. OPPOSITION PARTIES ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE ON APRIL 7 LABELING THE

INITIATIVE TO ESTABLISH THE COMMISSION A FARCE. THE COMMUNIQUE WAS SUBSCRIBED TO BY UDEL, AGUERO CONSERVATIVES, AUTHENTIC CONSERVATIVES

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THE SOCIAL CHRISTIAN SPINTER PARTY NOT REPRESENTED BY UDEL, AND THE NASCENT NICARAGUAN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (MDN) LED BY ROBELO. THE OFFICIAL CONSERVATIVE PARTY (PCN) DID NOT SIGN THE COMMUNIQUE. THE ABSENCE OF PCN SUPPORT LED TO SPECULATION THAT FISSURES ARE SHOWING IN THE OPPOSITION AND THE PCN IS GETTING READY TO MAKE A DEAL WITH SOMOZA. HOWEVER, ON APRIL 9, THE PCN CAME OUT WITH A DECLARATION THAT THEY, TOO, REJECTED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMISSION AS BEING TOO LITTLE AND TOO LATE.

4. THE COMMUNIQUE LAMBASTED THE GOVERNMENT IN GENERAL TERMS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND SPECIFICALLY THE COMMISSION INITIATIVE BECAUSE IT WOULD HAVE NO POWERS AND WAS ESTABLISHED ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF GIVING A WHITEWASH TO THE GON'S COVERUP OF THE CHAMORRO ASSASSINATION.

5. SOMOZA'S LIBERAL PARTY (PLN) IS ENGAGED IN INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH THE PCN AND OTHER OPPOSITIONISTS REGARDING SOME OF THE OPPOSITION'S DEMANDS WHICH SOMOZA HAS SAID HE CAN ACCEPT. ON ELECTORAL REFORM, THERE HAVE BEEN PCN-PLN DISCUSSIONS IN AN EFFORT TO FIND AN ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISE ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE ELECTORAL TRIBUNALS UNDER THE PROPOSED NEW ELECTORAL LAW. A TEST OF WHETHER ANY PROGRESS CAN BE MADE THROUGH THIS ROUTE WILL OCCUR ON APRIL 11, WHEN THE PCN WILL PRESENT ITS CASE IN A SENATE SESSION ON THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ELECTORAL REFORM INITIATIVE. IF THE PLN REFUSES THE PCN POSITION, THE PCN WILL PRESENT A STATEMENT WHICH HAS THE SUPPORT OF OTHER OPPOSITIONISTS AND THEN WALK OUT OF THE SESSION.

6. THERE HAS ALSO BEEN A GON CONTACT WITH ARCHBISHOP OBANDO TO FEEL HIM OUT ON WHETHER AND ON WHAT CONDITIONS HE WOULD BE WILLING TO ONCE AGAIN INITIATE THE DIALOGUE MOVEMENT. OBANDO APPARENTLY HAS NOT YET COMMITTED HIMSELF.

7. COMMENT: THERE IS SLIGHT PROGRESS TOWARD PRIVATELY EXPLORING AREAS FOR ACCOMMODATION BETWEEN THE ANTI- AND PRO-SOMOZA FORCES. A FORMAL DIALOGUE AGAIN APPEARS TO BE EVENTUALLY POSSIBLE IN THE FUTURE, , ALTHOUGH OPPOSITION COORDINATION COULD BE SEVERELY STRAINED, IF NOT COMPLETELY DISRUPTED, BY THE INITIATION OF SUCH TALKS. THE PCN IS STILL COORDINATING ITS POSITIONS IN CONGRESS WITH THE OTHER OPPOSITION PARTIES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic DecapTIONing: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ASSASSINATION, HUMAN RIGHTS, INVESTIGATIONS, ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICES, OPPOSITION PARTIES, COMMUNIQUEs, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 apr 1978
DecapTION Date: 20 Mar 2014
DecapTION Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MANAGU01736
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780161-0983
Format: TEL
From: MANAGUA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780459/aaaabxyu.tel
Line Count: 113
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: db60a1b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: 78 MANAGUA 1638
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2974344
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GON INITIATIVES TOWARDS DIALOGUE
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, NU, (CHAMORRO, PEDRO JOAQUIN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/db60a1b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014